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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 002526

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PINR](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [PARM](#) [KCRM](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [AM](#) [KPRP](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON CESIUM-137 CONFISCATED FROM ARMENIAN
NATIONAL

REF: A) STATE 236159 B) YEREVAN 02450

Classified By: DCM A.F. Godfrey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) We met November 18 with Ashot Martirosyan, head of the Armenian Nuclear Regulatory Agency (ANRA) and underscored the USG's continued interest in this cesium-137 seizure case (refs A and B). Martirosyan stated that he had still not received any substantive information from the Armenian National Security Service (NSS) about the seizure and/or why the Armenian national had the material. NSS officials had only informed Martirosyan that the Armenian national in custody refused to say where he acquired the cesium. Martirosyan told us that he had not informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of this incident because he did not have even basic information about the radioactive source, or whether there was any contamination into the local environment. Martirosyan told us that when he received this information he would report in full to the IAEA. We pressed Martirosyan to ensure that Armenia fulfilled its reporting obligations.

¶2. (C) Martirosyan told us that he reported the December 2003, Government of Armenia (GOAM) seizure of a container of strontium-90 to the IAEA. Martirosyan stated that there was a IAEA release from February 9, 2003, describing a level 2 INES event out of Armenia, titled "Unshielded Radioactive Source Found in Metal Scrap." Martirosyan also showed us that the event was listed on the Nuclear Events Web-based system (NEWS). Martirosyan stated that the GOAM had contacted Russian authorities concerning this container. Russian authorities could only confirm that the container was produced during the Soviet period and that the records pertaining to the container were lost and probably not retrievable. Martirosyan was not optimistic that the origin of the strontium-90 container would be ever clear.

EVANS